

King County Metro Job Access Van Program

Supplementary Questions and Answers

Background

In August, King County Metro met with community agencies to provide an overview of the Job Access Van Program. Metro received funding from the Federal Transportation Administration to sponsor a low-cost van lease program for agencies that were involved in welfare reform. There were several questions that were asked during that overview that required additional research and a written response. This is a supplementary response to the questions identified by various community agencies that were in attendance.

1. What is the expected annual cost of a van program? What costs are included? What portion of the costs were associated with drivers?

A van typically costs between \$15,000 and \$20,000 per year to operate. This includes all operating costs such as the lease, maintenance, fuel etc. Drivers cannot be paid by Metro although Job Access permits this. Metro's bargaining agreement prohibits payment to non-union drivers. Drivers may cost about one third to a quarter of the cost of operations and cost must be covered by the applicant agency.

2. How does reimbursement work?

The community agency would create an expense during a month. It would then bill Metro using the reimbursement form provided in the agreement. The form must be accompanied with appropriate documentation i.e. receipts, timesheets etc.

Metro will issue a check to the agency in the amount of 50 percent of the allowable reimbursable expenses. Allowable reimbursable expenses are those authorized by the Federal Transit Administration and the County.

3. For daycare trips, do destinations need to be specified in the application? What are the restrictions?

Trips to childcare centers and daycare centers will be permitted in the vans. Agencies will be required to meet all federal and state laws for transporting children. Community agencies may have to equip vans with a child seat. The grant will pay for 50 percent of this cost.

A parent and/or legal guardian must accompany any child who is being transported. Agencies will be required to identify specific childcare centers that they will be transporting children to in their agreements. Vans may not be used field trips or sundry event trips.

They may be used for emergency trips involving parents and children as long as this is specified in the agreement.

4. What is the capacity of the vans?

These are 12 passenger vehicles.

5. When would the program end? What happens when the program ends?

Agreements will cover a 12 month period but can be extended to December 30th 2000. Metro can continue to lease vans for the \$300/month cost. However, after the end of the program it may not be able to provide the 50 percent reimbursement.

Metro is applying with other transit agencies in the Puget Sound region for multi-year funding from the Federal Transit Administration. We anticipate being able to continue this program for an additional 3 years to the end of year 2003 but this will be based on the success of this program and our ability to compete for grant funding.

6. Would a back-up vehicle be available? What happens if a van breaks down? If a service such as AAA were used, would those costs be reimbursable?

Back up vehicles will be provided at the sole discretion of the County. Generally, routine maintenance on the vehicles will take no longer than a day. Should the van be undergoing maintenance for a major repair the county may decide to issue a vehicle to permanently replace it.

Contract language states that the Agency shall designate a responsible management staff person who will respond to any accident or vehicle breakdown and inform the county of the condition of the vehicle. Contacting a towing service or AAA may be necessary for the Agency to provide response. Since costs related to this incident would be van related 50% of the costs incurred would be reimbursable under the conditions outlined in agreements.

7. Who keeps the van overnight?

The contracting agency will be responsible for storage of the vehicle.

8. Can contract be with two or more agencies?

Metro will contract with a single agency for the vehicle but coordination, use and cost sharing arrangements are encouraged between agencies.

9. Can an agency have more than one van?

Yes. The target agencies (Department of Social and Health Services, Employment Security, Seattle-King County Private Industry Council, Seattle Jobs Initiative, King County Jobs Initiative, Seattle Housing Authority, King County Housing Authority, and Community and Technical Colleges) are working with Metro to ensure that the community based organizations that are selected for a lease arrangement are those that most effectively meet the needs of the low-income and TANF populations that need the service. They and Metro will want to try to ensure that there is coordination of funding and programming between themselves and the community agencies that are recipients of the vehicles.

10. Do clients serve need to be TANF recipients?

No. TANF recipients are the primary target group. Low-income populations that met the Department of Housing and Urban Development income are also targeted. Low-income households are defined as those with household incomes at or below 50% of the median income. This is calculated to be less than \$25,000 annually.

11. What type of information is required for the quarterly progress reports?

The Federal Transit Administration requires that recipient transit agencies provide specific information about their programs. With respect to the van program, Metro will require agencies to maintain daily trip logs that include origin/destination; pick up/drop off times; trip time; mileage and whether the trip was for adults or children. We will also want information about trip purpose i.e. commute, job search, training, childcare and/or emergency. We may also want information about customer satisfaction with the service but this type of information will be gathered by surveying riders. Metro may want agencies to assist in surveys of riders for ways to improve the program.

12. Does application need to identify # of trips, origin/destination, trip purpose?

The application does require a discussion of the need for the van and the purposes for which it will be used. (*See application form.*) Agencies are not required to identify numbers of trips they propose to provide.

13. Can trips be flexible?

A major intent of the Job Access Van program was to give community-base organizations a transportation tool to provide for needs that regular Metro service could

not. The vans can be used in a variety of ways and provide the rider with trips to shifts, childcare, and training. Metro would not be capable of providing these trips.

More importantly, vans address many of the transportation barriers faced by these riders. This population does not always have access to reliable personal transportation. They often cannot afford insurance or they may not have a drivers license. Cultural differences may make regular vanpool or carpool formation difficult. This strategy provides them with regular transportation and a driver to overcome these barriers.

14. Can trips go beyond King County?

Yes.

15. How will the vans or the program meet needs of disabled populations?

a) Existing ACCESS System - clients can use the existing ACCESS system if they are within the service area and if they meet the service criteria. This system requires a one day-in-advance reservation and payment of a fare. The Job Access grant cannot be used as reimbursement for fares. Other funding sources such as TANF funds may be used for fares.

b) CBO Leases Equipped Vehicle from Outside Vender - A community based organization may lease a lift-equipped vehicle from an outside vender and Metro would reimburse the organization for 50% of the lease costs.

c) CBO Leases Equipped Van from Metro - A community based organization may also request a lift-equipped van from Metro instead of the regular vanpool vehicle. Accessible Services will make surplus vehicles with lifts available for this lease arrangement.